

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **REPUBLIC DAY MUST BE PROTECTED: A NATION MUST NOT FORGET ITS TRUE BIRTH**

#### **- A National Call by Dr. Nyaho Nyaho-Tamakloe**

As Ghana approaches another July 1st, I find it imperative to remind the nation of the historical and constitutional importance of Republic Day, and to voice my strong disapproval of any attempts to dilute or distort its meaning. It is of utmost importance that Ghanaians be reminded of the true significance of Republic Day, and the urgent need to preserve it as a cornerstone of our nationhood. The attempt to repurpose this historic day under political pretexts is a dangerous distortion of Ghana's national memory — one that must be strongly resisted.

#### **Historical Context: Independence Was Not Enough**

Ghana gained political independence from British colonial rule on 6th March 1957, becoming the first sub-Saharan African country to do so. However, that independence was partial, as Ghana still recognized the British monarch — Queen Elizabeth II — as the ceremonial head of state. Ghana operated under a constitutional monarchy, with a Governor-General representing the Crown in Accra. In effect, Ghana remained a dominion within the British Commonwealth, much like Canada or Australia at the time.

This changed on 1st July 1960, when Ghana became a Republic under a new constitution, following a national referendum held on 27th April 1960. The people of Ghana voted overwhelmingly to transition into a republic, replacing the Queen with a President as

head of state. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was sworn in as the first President of the Republic of Ghana.

From that day forward, Ghana gained full sovereignty over its domestic and foreign affairs – including defence, foreign policy, legislation, and constitutional governance. The nation was now fully in charge of its destiny.

### **Institutional Growth Rooted in Republicanism**

The Republic era paved the way for Ghana's institutional development. It was during this period that:

- The Ministry of Defence was fully Ghanaian-controlled.
- The Ghana Armed Forces, including the Army, Navy, and Air Force, were consolidated and expanded under Dr. Nkrumah.
- Educational institutions like the University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the University of Cape Coast, the Ghana School of Law, and the University of Ghana Medical School gained national priority.
- Among others.

This progress flowed from Republican status, not from the limited self-rule of 1957. It was on 1st July 1960 that Ghana truly took control of its future – politically, economically, and institutionally.

### **Current Developments and the Misrepresentation of History**

In 2019, the government led by President Nana Akufo-Addo introduced the Public Holidays (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act 989). This act abolished July 1st as a public holiday and instead introduced:

- 4th August as Founders' Day, recognizing multiple contributors to Ghana's independence, including members of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC).
- 21st September as Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Day, to commemorate Nkrumah's birthday.

The government's explanation was that 4th August, the founding date of the UGCC in 1947, better represented the collective foundation of Ghana's struggle. However, this shift undermines the constitutional significance of 1st July, which marks the transition from British dominion to full republican statehood. It also reduces Republic Day to a non-holiday, despite its historic and political weight.

Furthermore, attempts to rename or replace Republic Day as a **"Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving"** risk erasing the essence of Ghana's full independence. While spiritual reflection has its place, it must not override constitutional milestones.

## **A Categorical Rejection of Historical Revisionism**

I, Dr. Nyaho Nyaho-Tamakloe, categorically reject any effort to erase or reframe Republic Day. The 1st of July is not a religious day. It is not a partisan day. It is the day our republic was born.

To turn it into something else — or to ignore it altogether — is to commit historical sacrilege. A nation that forgets its foundational moments cannot build a coherent future. Republic Day is not only important — it is more fundamentally transformative than even Independence Day. Independence gave us the chance to govern ourselves. Republic status gave us the power to do so.

## **Call to Action: Preserve July 1st for Posterity**

I call on:

- The Parliament of Ghana to revisit and restore 1st July as a national holiday.
- Our educational institutions to teach the real history of Ghana's republican journey.
- Our media to highlight this truth every year.
- Our youth to study and defend Ghana's authentic past.
- All governments, present and future, to place national history above partisan convenience.

If we fail to defend Republic Day, we betray the very ideals of independence and self-determination.

Let us restore Republic Day to its rightful place as the symbol of Ghana's full freedom and sovereign identity.

**Signed:**

**Dr. Nyaho Nyaho-Tamakloe**

(Former Ambassador | Statesman | Founding Member, New Patriotic Party)